

## THE FIRST AND ONLY PATENTED ELEPHANT HOTEL

Right now you see  
before your very eyes  
the first completed example  
of a fully patented invention.  
Over a million pieces of timber  
form its bones, bound together  
by four tons of bolts, bars, and nails.  
And the vast expanses  
of its painted grey skin  
took twelve thousand square feet of tin.

Light comes in through twenty windows  
as well as the two glazed holes  
that serve as eyes.

This is the very first building  
in the form of an animal,  
the body of which is floored  
and divided into rooms.  
The first, but by no means the last!  
The trunk, of course, is the sewer,  
and the legs contain the stairs.

A spectacular tradition!  
Pachyderms have been prized  
by the powerful of Europe -- Emanuel I  
of Portugal, Charles V of Spain,  
Louis XIII of France, Pope Leo X.  
Even a wealthy Dutch citizen owned one.

But this is the first hollowed out  
and fully inhabitable elephant,  
and its patent unconditionally extends  
to any other building  
in the form of an animal,  
so that some time in the future  
various bison, big-bellied hippos,  
storks, giraffes, crocodiles,  
even great metal snakes  
will cover the countryside --  
a paralyzed kingdom of animals.

## WALLET

The first Saturday in the city  
I got my pocket picked --  
me, a grown man --  
me, who had gone down through Mexico,  
third class,

on railroad cars full of peasants  
with swollen eyes, chickens,  
gauchos, hoods.  
Now here in the city  
in a half-empty bar,  
to lose a wallet!  
And what was most important  
seemed to matter least --  
driver's license, social security card,  
blood type, insurance number --  
they would be replaced --  
but a pocket calendar  
in the middle of the year?  
I still knew the day and the date  
but not where the day's particular block  
was located in relation to all the others  
in its reassuring, geometric grid.  
And the random addresses --  
I would have to wait now  
for all the people I had met  
in restaurants, bars, trains,  
at parties, in planes,  
to get in touch with me  
if they wanted to  
and maybe they really didn't.  
And there were so many other things  
I had in there  
that I couldn't even remember.  
I bought another one fast  
and filled it with money and food stamps,  
but it always felt empty  
especially when someone  
would pass me on the street  
his back pocket bulging  
with everything but his soul.

#### THE PRODIGY

By some lucky break  
the kid got adopted  
by the people  
who bought the house  
where his real parents  
had lived.  
He loved it  
because of the big bay window  
that had a view of the bridge  
suspended over the water  
but he never looked  
out of the window